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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EU](#) [LO](#)
SUBJECT: SLOVAK RESPONSE TO GAERC DEMARCHE

REF: SECSTATE 127023

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Keith Eddins for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)
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[¶1.](#) (C) Summary. Poloff delivered reftel points to Albin Otruba, European Correspondent at the MFA. Otruba said the Slovak delegation is most interested in the topics related to the western Balkans, and particularly Serbia and Kosovo. With respect to the Middle East and the WTO, Otruba predicted that GAERC would "just talk," as they will be waiting to see how the new U.S. Administration approaches these topics. Separately, Slovakia announced on December 3, that it will nearly double its contribution to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development's fund for the western Balkans, from 250,000 Euro to 450,000 Euro. End summary.

WESTERN BALKANS

[¶2.](#) (C) Slovakia is frustrated that the Netherlands is still blocking implementation of Serbia's Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA). Otruba said it was unfair to reach the agreement and then block its implementation just because of one unapprehended war criminal, Ratko Mladic.

[¶3.](#) (C) Otruba suggested recent events in Kosovo should lend credence to Slovakia's position on recognition. In his view, the Kosovar Albanians showed their true colors when they protested (and effectively postponed) the implementation of EULex. Otruba believes most Albanian Kosovars, including in the government, have no interest in a peaceful rapprochement with Serbs in Mitrovica, as they would prefer to see all ethnic Serbs leave their territory.

PAKISTAN

[¶4.](#) (C) The discussion on Pakistan at GAERC was originally expected to be a vague one about increasing engagement on a range of issues. The attacks in Mumbai, however, have changed the nature of the discourse and Otruba expects concrete results. He expressed concern, however, that the EU (and Slovakia) are stretched too thin to match rhetorical support with meaningful action.

EU ENLARGEMENT

[¶5.](#) (C) Slovakia views the Commission's recent report on enlargement positively, and "officially" Slovakia's position is one of support for Turkish accession. Otruba allowed, however, that if Turkish accession were put to a popular or Parliamentary vote in Slovakia it would probably fail. In that respect, vocal French opposition is very useful for many EU States, which can express support for Turkey in the certain knowledge that will not join the EU any time soon.

[¶6.](#) (C) Slovakia is firmly in favor of Croatian accession, which Otruba predicted would take place in 2010. Slovakia will speak in favor of liberalizing the EU's visa regime with

Balkan countries at the GAERC.
EDDINS